

Message Text

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ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-14 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

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NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ICRC, IR

SUBJECT: STANTON STATEMENT TO INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT BY AMERICAN RED CROSS CHAIRMAN, DR. FRANK STANTON, INTRODUCING RESOLUTION ON ACCOUNTING FOR THE DEAD AND MISSING IN ARMED CONFLICTS, NOVEMBER 12, IN GENERAL COMMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS. PLEASE PASS TEXT TO AMERICAN RED CROSS NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS.

2. BEGIN TEXT: THE SEARCH FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE MISSING DURING AND AFTER ARMED CONFLICTS IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE NAME OF THE RED CROSS. THE PROBLEM IS PRESENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF VIRTUALLY EVERY ARMED CONFLICT: WE ALL RECALL PICTURES OF RELATIVES STANDING AT TRAIN STATIONS, OR AT DOCKSIDE, AS PRISONERS-OF-WAR RETURNED FROM CAPTIVITY, WITH SIGNS ASKING QTE DOES ANYONE HAVE INFORMATION ON MY SON UNQTE OR FATHER OR HUSBAND, AS THE CASE MAY BE? THE ENDING OF ARMED HOSTILITIES IS ALWAYS WELCOME -- BUT FOR THE FAMILIES OF THE MISSING IT IS A TIME OF SPECIAL DIFFICULTY. THE CERTAINTY OF KNOWING A LOVED ONE HAS DIED WOULD
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SEEM PREFERABLE TO THE DRAWN-OUT ANGUISH OF NOT KNOWING

THE FATE OF ONE WHO IS MISSING IN ACTION.

THE RED CROSS HAS A NATURAL AND TRADITIONAL ROLE TO PLAY IN RESOLVING THIS HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM. FOR OVER 100 YEARS, INFORMATION BUREAUX ORGANIZED BY THE RED CROSS HAVE HELPED FIND AND EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON THOSE WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY AND OTHER MISSING IN CONNECTION WITH ARMED CONFLICTS.

THE PURPOSE OF THE RESOLUTION WE HAVE JOINED IN PROPOSING IS TO REMIND THE PARTIES TO ARMED CONFLICTS -- WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCE AND WHEREVER THEY MAY BE -- OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM, AND TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETIES, THE ICRC, AND THE TRACING AGENCIES AND THE PROTECTING POWERS IN RESOLVING IT. THE RESOLUTION CALLS ON PARTIES TO ARMED CONFLICTS TO HELP LOCATE AND CARE FOR THE GRAVES OF THE DEAD, TO FACILITATE THE DISINTERMENT AND RETURN OF REMAINS, AND TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE MISSING.

IT APPLIES EQUALLY TO SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS, INCLUDING, FOR EXAMPLE, JOURNALISTS. THIS RESOLUTION COVERS PERSONS OF ALL PARTIES -- INCLUDING THOSE NOT PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT.

THESE TASKS ARE TRADITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES TO ARMED CONFLICTS -- AND IT IS A RED CROSS TRADITION TO HELP RESOLVE THEM. THERE CAN NEVER BE 100 PERCENT SUCCESS. BUT THERE SHOULD BE RECOGNITION OF THE HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATION OF PARTIES TO ARMED CONFLICTS. I HOPE THIS CONFERENCE WILL SUPPORT THIS RESOLUTION UNANIMOUSLY. END TEXT.
HELMS

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